

The Great VENTURE:

S H E W I N G,

That Man's Life in this world is a *Ven-
ture*; wherein he runs the hazard of
an Everlasting Estate of Happiness
or Misery in another world, accor-
ding as he behaves himself here.

Also Advice to Youth; with several other things profit-
able for all who will seriously read and mind them.

Discite justitiam moniti, & non temnere Divos.

Se'ng here y^e are warn'd, learn righteousness thereby,
And slight not Gods thrice Sacred Majesty.

By E. A. a Well-wisher to the Souls of Men.

L O N D O N,
Printed for Hen. Million, at the Common Hunt-
man in Chancery-lane, Anno Dom. 1668.

A. E.

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E*ven as a Tennis-ball, Man in this world
By various changes up and down is hurl'd:
Objects of sense, his own lusts, and the Devil
Do dayly toss and bandy him to evil:
Where will he fall at last? ah! he must dy,
And drop i'th' Hazard of Eternity.*





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ding as he behaves himself here.

O Man! thy God thee made
for an eternal state,
Where both the good and bad
have their appointed fate,
And thou must venture.

He hath determined,
and in his Word reveal'd:
Sin shall be punished,
this Word can't be repeal'd:
But thou must venture.

What is ordain'd by Him,
can't be made void by thee:
Thou must submit to Him,
and stand to his Decree,
And thou must venture.

Yet He will pardon sin,
be'ng punish'd in his Son:
For those who here begin
their lives to mend and turn,
And thus will venture.

The Great Venture.

He tells thee, he doth hate
fin, and will vengeance take
Upon the hairy pate
of those who him forsake,
And thus will venture.

Oh that I might advise
thee in this weighty case!
Oh that thou wouldst be wise,
and let my words take place!
In this great venture.

But if a sinner will
believe his word, and grace
In Christ accept, now while
'tis offer'd for a space;
And thus will venture.

My Counsel is to fear
Gods Majesty, and crave
Mercy at his hands here,
that he thy soul may save,
At the † last venture.

What's past he will forgive,
and for the time to come,
As they to him will live,
so he will favour them
Who thus do venture.

Renounce thy will and lust,
Thy self up to him give :
And in his mercy trust,
and to his glory live,
And thus do venture.

'Tis left now in thy hand,
and choose what thou wilt do:
To obey his command,
or after thy lust go:
Each way to venture.

Though doubtful thoughts arise
and toss thy troubled mind:
Although thy heart no ease,
peace, rest, or hope can find,
Yet this way venture.

For shortly thou must dy,
and then shalt surely know,
How far his word is true,
and whither thou must go,
As thou dost venture.

Though many ghastly fears
thy conscience terrifie
Though dreadful God appears,
and near despair thou ly,
Yet still thus venture.

† Which will be at the hour of death.

Though



The Great Venture.

Though blasphemy upstarts,
and Atheism in thy breast :
Though Satan shoot his darts,
and thou be sore opprest;
Yet still thus venture.

Well then, while 'tis to day,
what e're thy life hath been,
Believe, repent, and pray,
and add not sin to sin:
For thou must venture.

Though strong temptations,
provoke thee hard to sin:
And thy corruptions
bestir themselves within:
Yet still thus venture.

If thou with crosses meet,
and God afflict thee here :
With patience submit,
and his great name still fear.
For thou must venture.

Entertain none of these,
against them all still war :
Let no such thoughts thee please
as do with Gods Law jar,
Thus do thou venture.

Rage not, do not rebel,
blaspheme not. nor despise
His rod; his holy will
cross not in any wise :
For thou must venture,

Canst thou do any good,
now while thy soul is here,
Cumber'd with flesh and blood?
to do it don't forbear:
So doing venture.

To his sweet rest thy Lord
will shortly call thee hence :
And with a rich reward
will crown thy patience;
If thou thus venture.

For unto ev'ry man
according to his deeds,
Recompence shall be giv'n,
eternally he speeds,
As he shall venture.

Ah! an eternal state,
(as thou ere long shalt find)
A business is of weight,
to mind it frame thy mind:
And wisely venture.

Not.

The Great Venture.

Not as some desperate fools,
who fondly do presume,
Though they walk by no rules,
it shall go well with them,
Howere they venture.

For they who God renounce,
and now cast off the bond
Of their allegiance
to him, are lost beyond
All peradventure.

But he who hopes to find
Heav'n in the way to Hell,
Is mad ; and in the end
doth cast away his soule
He doth not venture.

Wherefore (O man) be wise,
consider, and forbear:
Do not thy God despise
presumptuously. but fear
How thou dost venture.

That man who in Gods way,
walks to eternal blifs,
'Tis he alone may say,
'There's hope I shall not misf,
Therefore I'll venture.

Bethink thy self a while,
Is thy immortal Soul
A thing so cheap and vile,
thou needst not care at all
How thou dost venture.

Who makes Gods will his Law,
and truly as he can,
Frames himself to obey ;
he onely is the man
Who rightly ventures:

O ! know that in thy breast
thou hast a pearl of price:
And nothing here posselt
can to its value rise :
Carefully venture.

The wicked venture not,
but desperately throw,
Away their souls for nought,
into eternal wo,
At all adventure.

A Jewel of such worth
is thy immortal soul,
That to it heav'n and earth
a trifle we may call :
Don't rashly venture.

And

The Great Venture.

And if it once be lost,
alas! 'tis gone for ever :
And then no pains or cost,
can it again recover :

Oh! fear and venture.

Oh venture not to lose
thy dear immortal soul,
For such poor things as these,
least thou in hell bewail
Thy foolish venture.

Shall I a reason give,
why thy soul's of such value?
'Tis because it must live
in endless joy or sorrow:
As thou dost venture.

Oh stake not heavens glory,
and an immortal crown,
For things so transitory,
and in a moment gone!
'Twere a mad venture.

Then what's a moments pleasure
to endless joy or pain ?
What is earth's paltry treasure,
to endless loss or gain ?
For this don't venture.

Dar'st thou the hazard run
of everlasting wo :
For a short dream of gain,
fame, pleasure, here below ?
A wretched venture!

What is a bubble here,
a little painted glass,
A gay, but fading flower,
a pile of withering grass?
For this don't venture.

And hast thou not the heart,
a while to play the man :
And with thy base lusts part,
eternal life to gain ?
And nobly venture.

What's honor, praise and fame,
from mens unconstant breath :
To everlasting shame,
attending thee in death ?
For this don't venture.

Ah! thrice unhappy man,
and strangely desp'rate fool :
Who ventur'st to damn,
but not to save thy soul !
Oh cursed venture!

The Great Venture.

One of the two must be,
for God hath sent thee here,
To prove thee, and to try (steer,
what course thou'lt chuse to
And which way venture.

'T will be no cause of grief,
at last when thou must dy,
In holiness of life,
that thou didst patiently
Trust God and venture.

Therefore sit down, at last
consider, let thy heart
Advisedly forecast,
and chuse the better part,
Before thou venture.

Though it be somewhat hard
as a poor Pilgrim here
His law still to regard,
and mix thy joy with fear,
While thou dost venture.

Make good use of this season,
look how thou chusest now:
For so shall be thy portion
in endless bliss or wo:
This is thy venture.

To bring thy will to his,
and thy dear lust forsake:
To bear thy daily cross,
and suffer for his sake:
And thus to venture.

Then take the safest course,
for thy Eternity:
Thou canst not be the worse
for living virtuously,
If so thou'lt venture.

Yet know, the trouble's short,
here is no lasting pain:
'Tis but a moments smart,
it cannot long remain,
Take heart and venture.

Joy and eternal Rest
will afterward succeed:
When thou in heav'n art blest,
thou wilt confess indeed,

*'Twas a safe Venture,
'Twas a brave Venture.*



ADVICE



Advice to Youth.

Give him the morning of thy youthful days,
 Who did create and form thee for his praise:
 God made thee for himself, that he might be
 Thine, and thou his; there's thy Felicity.

'Twill be lost time and labour to attend,
 What er'e diverts thee from this blessed end :
 Hearken, to day he calls thee, and doth make
 Tenders of Grace ; mind it, the blessing take.

This is thy golden season, in thy prime
 To make him thine, and give thy self to him:
 Oh! miss not this fair opportunity,
 Least thou lament it to Eternity.

'Tis but accepting what he proffers, bow
 Thy will to his: Oh seek him, seek him now!
 Come while he calls to day; for why, to morrow,
 Who knows but thou maist end thy days in sorrow.

This present moment which we now possess,
 Is all we have t'ensure our Happiness:
 When death hath cut this life's small thred in twain,
 'Twill be too late to call time back again.

B

Youth

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(2)

Youth stain'd, with vice, and lost in vanity,
Unfits for God, ripens for misery :
Hardens the Heart to slight its chiefest good,
Therefore despis'd, because not understood.

Ten thousand worlds can make no recompence
For Gods lost favour, and times ill expence :
Before the world and lust prevail, Oh give
Thy heart to him by whom thy heart doth live.

The longer sin takes rooting in thy heart,
The hardlier 'twill come out, and with more smart:
Delay of seeking thy eternal blifs, (miss.
Leaves still less hope thou'lt find, more fear thou'lt

Now heav'n, and Christ (who purchas'd that sweet
Are the fair prize of this thy lifes short race: (place)
Oh set out then betimes ! hold on thy way ;
That thou maist win this prize make no delay.

Thy days are few, thy tryal cann't be long,
Quit thy self bravely, play the man, be strong : (lust
Watch, pray, strive hard 'gainst devil, world and
For daily help in God through Christ still trust.

Then let the grim-fac'd Messenger appear,
Pale Death to thee will bring no cause of fear :
But as thy friend, and fathers servant, come
Both to invite thee, and attend thee home.

Where thy thrice happy soul, Heav'ns Majesty
Shall see, love, praise, admire, eternally :
Ravish'd with pure delights, rivers of pleasure,
From Gods sweet presence which shal flow for ever.

An



*An Humble Acknowledgment of Gods free
goodness, and our own vileness
and wretchedness.*

Lord! what I am, I am alone by thee,
The most free author of all good to me :
What I find better than the worst of ill,
Is from thy favour, and thy meer good will :
The worst of punishments I have deserv'd,
Whose heart from thy just Law hath ever swerv'd :
No villany so base, but I do find
A proneness to it in my wretched mind :
Shouldst thou not punish my offences, yet
On mischief is my nature so far set,
That I my self-destroyer soon should be,
And find a way to my own miserie :
Shouldst thou but leave me to my own hearts evil,
My mind a Hell, my will would prove a Devil :
So, that I do not now the utmost know,
Of wretchedness, to thy meer grace I ow:
Which still forbears my sins due punishment,
And doth my utter ruine yet prevent.

The Paradox.

Lord! must the best fare worst? the good & just
By great afflictions humbled are toth' dust :
Mean while the wicked prosper ; they who God
Contemn, yet feel not his afflicting Rod :
Can all this be, and thou yet God above,
Who hat'st the wicked and the just dost love?
Thy Providence is strange ; yet thou hereby
The just mans Faith and Patience dost try.

(4)

Of the World.

THe world's a large and publick stage, whereon
All act their sev'ral parts, and then are gone :
Nought else are acted here but Tragedies;
For in the close of all each Actor dies.

Of the same.

THe World's a Sea, mens passions are the winds,
Which belching from their fierce and boistrous
Such tempests cause; that many (being tost (minds
In storms which they themselves have rais'd) are lost.

Of Sin.

SIn is the Creatures will opposing Gods,
The Subject with the Sovereign at odds:
Whereby proud man exalts his own base lust,
Above Gods Law, most holy, good, and just.

Of the Law.

Sinners toth' Law of God do offer force,
Gods Law to sinners doth denounce a curse :
The sinner breaks the Law, and God doth thwart :
God and the Law will break the sinners heart.

Of Death.

Dearth is the King of Terrors; with his dart
Taking his aim at each mans trembling heart:
A Dragon, whose envenom'd fatal sting
Strikes all; and spareth not the greatest King :
Death is sins brat, mans bane, Gods curse, hells gate,
To all while in their unconverted state :
But to the just, (by faith in Christ who live,
And seek their chiefest good in things above)
Death's a safe passage into heav'nly blifs,
The Gate of Life, the door of Paradise.

of

Of Christ.

GODS Son became Man, and the Law obey'd,
 Its curse he bore, and for our trespass dy'd :
 By his death Sinners live, and have access
 To God, though Infinite in Holiness

Of Faith.

FAITH is the Eye whereby we Christ perceive,
 Faith is the Hand whereby we Christ receive:
 God freely offers Christ. Faith takes the gift,
 As seeing it mean't to all who it accept.

Of pardon upon going to Christ

WHEN once the Sinners guilty troubled Soul
 His lost estate comes to see, and bewail :
 And by conviction sensible is made,
 That he a Saviours Righteousness doth need :
 And is made willing from his very Heart,
 With his own Works and Righteousness to part :
 And be beholding to free Grace alone
 For his forgiveness, and Salvation :
 And as a weaned Child is well content,
 For to receive Christs Kingly Government :
 And become subject to his Royal will,
 Ceasing henceforth his own Lust to fulfil :
 And so in his own Breast a Law doth finde,
 In some sort ruling his rebellious Minde :
 That notwithstanding Folly doth remain,
 Yet in his Heart Wickedness doth not reign :
 When Sin Committed moves him to Repent,
 And Sorrow emb'red makes him to Lament :
 When to be Holy is his Hearts desire,
 And in his Actions strives to be sincere ;
 Though failings very great sometimes appear,
 And weaknesse too often here, and there
 Do shew themselves : which yet are not approv'd,
 But truth still in the inward parts is lov'd :
 And after perfect Grace his Soul doth groan,
 And for that end would fain to Heaven be gone:

And

And yet submits to stay Gods leasure here,
 And serve him as he can till he come there :
 When Sin his burthen is become, and he
 Would fain like Christ in Grace and Glory be :
 Whose failings keep him humble, and thereby
 Self-emptied he more need of Christ doth see :
 Who though he perish, cannot yet afford
 While in this World, quite to forsake the Lord :
 And cast away his small degree of trust,
 And wholly turn from God unto his Lust :
 But would be kept from Sin, and stand in awe,
 And honour in his heart Gods holy Law :
 And though his Faith and Hope be often low,
 Yet he would venture still on Christ, and throw
 Himself a wretched Sinner at his feet,
 And self-condemned, mercy still intreat :
 The humble Soul which God hath brought to this,
 Surely can never of it's Pardon miss.

Of Union with Christ : And our advantage thereby.

NO sooner Sin and we do part, but Christ
 And we are one ; and thus in Union blest :
 For all his blessings ours do become,
 While all our Sin, and Curse he takes on him.

Of Holiness.

THe Grace of God reveal'd for our Salvation,
 Merits from us a Holy Conversation :
 They most indebted are who are best us'd,
 Love deserves to be serv'd, and not abus'd.

Of Repentance.

Repentance is a change of Mind and Heart,
 Whereby the will from its own will doth part:
 Sin is our own will pleas'd, Gods disobey'd :
 Repentance, Gods Will pleas'd, and ours deny'd:
 At least in the desire this will be found,
 And true endeavour ; if the Heart be sound :
 Grief, Tears and Conscience troubles after Sin,
 Make no Repentance untill this come in.

Of Time.

WHat thing Time is can hardly be defin'd,
 'Tis gone while 'tis but thought of in the minde
 Time is that in which all things else are done,
 And yet of all things is it self least known:
 If 't were a Body surely then it would
 Be seen, felt, heard : our Sense perceive it could :
 If 'twere a spirit 'twould immortal be ;
 But Time spends, and will shortly cease to be :
 What then is Time ? which all the good and wise
 So much esteem of, and so highly prize ?
 'Tis neither Silver, Gold, nor precious Stone,
 Above them all, yet 'tis prefer'd alone :
 'Tis that of which all stand in so great need,
 And yet from all it flies with greatest speed:
 Swifter then Foot, or Wing, or Winde. or Tide,
 Or hasty Streams along the Bankes which glide :
 'Tis a short space, wherein each one doth treasure
 Up for himself Eternal Woe or Pleasure :
 'Tis but a moment, which spent ill or well,
 Brings endless joyes in Heaven, or pains in Hell.

Of Eternity.

WHen this short space of Time's expir'd then we :
 (And not before) shall know Eternity :
 God no beginning knows, nor end shall see,
 He was from, and is to Eternity :
 But Men and Angels did begin to be,
 They are not from, but to Eternity :
 So Man being born, his Life hath here a date ;
 Which done, he goes to his Eternal state.

Wisdom.

VAin Man ! Wouldst thou be wise ? know Wisdom lies
 In things Divine; in Sacred Mysteries :
 To know the secrets of thy own vile Heart,
 So skil'd in Sin, so learn'd in that Black Art :
 To seek and finde thy everlasting Good
 In Christ; who purchas'd thy blis with his blood.

To

To steer thy course of Life in ev'ry action,
 Unto Gods Glory, and thy own Salvation :
*Hereby thy Soul thou shalt secure,
 And future happines make sure.*

Folly

Wouldst thou see Folly in it's deepest dye ?
 A Fool in grain ? then such an one is he
 Whose wit's a servant only to his will,
 Contriving how he may his Lust fulfil :
 Whose chiefest good is but himself to please,
 And melt away his dayes in sloath, and ease :
 Who wasts his precious hours in Vanity,
 And sleights God, Christ, Heaven, Hell, Eternity:
 Who lives as if he had no Soul to save,
 And minde not that he's hast'ning to his Grave:
 Close prisoner there in darkness to remain,
 Till God to Judgement call him forth again :

*A wretch he lives, a wretch he'l dye
 Snatcht hence to Endles Misery.*

An Exhortation to all.

LO ! Mortal Men of ev'ry rank and state,
 High, low, rich, poor, young, old, both small and great :
 Wisdome and Folly, Life and Death are set
 Before your Face ; and to your choice do yet
 Expose themselves : O Man while thou art here
 Be well advis'd how thou thy course dost steer !
 What guid thou chusest now, while in the way,
 Unto that place where thou must ever stay :
 And ne're return to mend what was amiss
 Here, in thy Lifes short race to Woe or Blis :
 Take Wisdome for thy guid, thy self commit
 To her safe conduct, she thy minde will suit
 To walk in Virtues path : and in the way
 Of Grace to Glory will thy Soul convey :
 O trust not blear-ey'd Folly ! which doth see
 Only things present as they seem to be :
 If Folly guid thee, know that thy own Will
 Blinded by Lust, will lead thee into Hell.



